

authors' approach is resourceful and innovative and will serve as a point of departure for future studies.

Ultimately, the authors argue that until quite recently, there has been a growing "democratization" of housing in North American cities. The housing industry responded enthusiastically and creatively to consumers' "will to possess", making home ownership increasingly accessible to various age and ethnic groups. At the same time, apartment house developers have expanded the shelter options for white-collar groups, the elderly, the young, and others for whom home ownership and maintenance has been undesirable. In both cases, the size, quality, and environment of such housing have gradually improved over time, while the social segregation of the city has decreased. Laborers and the poor (including many single mothers), who have been increasingly relegated to crowded rental flats in deteriorating neighborhoods, constitute the main exception to this democratization trend.

While Doucet and Weaver make a compelling case for the democratization trend in Hamilton, their attempts to generalize this finding to "the North American city" are not convincing. The more complex nature of U.S. race relations and the resulting phenomenon of suburban flight and urban decay make the integration and democratization trends of Hamilton seem less plausible for U.S. cities. Likewise, in both Canada and the U.S., there have been significant differences between urban and suburban housing stock. By limiting the scope of their study to Hamilton city proper, the authors may have painted a more equitable and integrated picture that is actually the case in most metropolitan areas.

These and other debates, however, suggest that *Housing the North American City* is an important and provocative book. It will no doubt find a large and well-deserved readership among urbanists on both sides of the border.

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Steven A. Epstein — *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991. Pp. vii, 307.

In this new work, Steven Epstein seeks to explain the appearance of wage labor and guilds in western Europe and to illuminate both their character and context. He accomplishes the latter with refreshing originality and a wide variety of sources, but addresses the former with less success.

Epstein begins by establishing that medieval guilds were not descendants of Roman craft and trade associations (*collegia*). These ancient guilds, which figured so prominently in coercive late-imperial economic legislation, disappeared as the germanic migrations of the fourth and fifth centuries transformed western Europe. Terms resembling "guild" (*gildonia*, *gegildan*) in early medieval documents, Epstein argues, denote religious confraternities or sworn peacekeeping associations unrelated to crafts or trade. Although Epstein sees no institutional continuity between ancient Roman and medieval guilds, he does acknowledge the importance of Roman law

which transmitted ideas about contracts and the right of the state to intervene in the economy.

Epstein sees medieval guilds emerging in the twelfth century and devotes his second chapter to a careful examination of the earliest documentary evidence for guilds. He acknowledges that masters formed these associations to promote their own interests and to establish local monopolies, but argues against the notion that guilds stifled competition. Particularly through his discussion of guild statutes, Epstein demonstrates that masters competed against one another. Guilds prescribed rules for competition rather than abolish it. Throughout Europe, groups of artisans and professionals chose this middle way that granted a measure of security and at the same time rewarded individual effort (100).

What hampers the effectiveness of this whole section of the book, however, is the ill-defined relationship of wage labor to guilds. Epstein acknowledges that guilds did not originate in order to organize labor and that contracted wage labor was both older than our earliest surviving contracts and older than guilds. Still, Epstein seems to hold that a “system of training and employing free labor...seemed to emerge in tandem” with guilds (101). This begs a huge question: why? Several times, Epstein reminds his reader that the development of wage labor was not inevitable; slavery and dependent labor had been dominant in western Europe for millennia. Why wage labor became so prominent in European urban centers from the twelfth century is an important question; unfortunately, it is not systematically addressed here.

This is particularly frustrating since Epstein mentions the limits of household economy and his excellent discussion of apprenticeship raises many possible connections between the rise of wage labor and changes in European domestic life. Did the church’s insistence on monogamy and the smaller domestic units it yielded lead prosperous and ambitious households to recruit labor in other ways (by taking in apprentices and hiring other workers)? Could changes in the family be responsible for the rise of wage labor? The hire of workers instead of the production of children would also limit claims on family patrimonies, an objective being pursued through primogeniture and dowries in these same centuries. Epstein’s work raises many tantalizing possibilities for linking the history of the family to issues of broad significance in the economic history of western Europe.

Chapters three and four are the real heart of this work, and one senses that they are closest to the author’s. Epstein describes the inner workings of guilds and their recruitment and treatment of laborers. His description of apprenticeship and the lot of journeymen and women is so rich with the details of workers’ lives that it would engage an undergraduate reader as well as delight professionals (who know how many dull charters one has to read in order to find such gems as these). Epstein then sets guilds in their broader social and political contexts. He accomplishes two things of real significance. First, he emphasizes the religious character of guilds and analyzes how Christianity shaped attitudes about work as well as the rules governing it. Epstein’s discussion of the effect of this confraternal character on the status of Jews and their place in the changing urban economy is excellent. Second, he looks broadly at the different ways in which guilds interacted with political authority. The several paradigms he suggests supply a framework for future inquiry.

The book concludes with a chapter on changes in labor and guilds in the fourteenth century. Epstein finds significant evidence of measures to restrict upward mobility into the ranks of the masters and relates workers’s increasingly frustrated

desire to become masters to the character of the urban revolts after the Black Death. He also links technological innovation to the competition and emphasis on quality fostered by guilds. In both these discussions, he connects guilds to large and significant issues in European history.

Such connections are the great contribution of *Wage Labor and Guilds*. Epstein's work refocuses scholarly attention on an old topic (guilds) in medieval history. But by looking at guilds in their social, economic, political, and cultural contexts, he raises an array of important questions. How did guilds and the economic structures they created contribute to the marginalization of women, Jews, and other outgroups? Were guilds the cradle of a capitalist ethic and technological innovation? Like any book that takes on a huge and important topic, this one is at times difficult and frustrating: it darts across more than a millennium and bounces from London to Paris to Genoa. But like the European tour which leaves the traveler exhausted and dazed, it also provides much to ponder and many vivid images to savor (my favorites being pigs assembled at the gates of Siena and London aldermen dealing with the "false caps" crisis). *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe* is a fine and provocative book.

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John K. Evans — *War, Women and Children in Ancient Rome*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991. Pp. xvi, 263.

In his introduction, Professor Evans points out that although much has been written about women in antiquity in the last two decades and undergraduate courses on the history of women in the ancient world have proliferated in American universities, there is the "tendency to treat the history of women in antiquity as a discrete topic" divorced from the "broader fabric of Ancient History at large" (x). This is the deficiency that the author intends to rectify by linking the study of Roman women and children to the history of Roman imperialism from the end of the Hannibalic war to the Principate of Augustus. He finds it impossible to believe that Rome could send abroad huge numbers of men for over two hundred years without significant changes occurring in the status of the women and children left behind.

In order to prove his thesis, Evans must first discuss the legal position of women in early Rome and the changes which had occurred by the early Principate. Beginning with the Twelve Tables, he traces the laws concerning guardianship, marriage, and property (dowry) as found in the ancient sources. This, of course, requires a certain amount of interpretation since the sources are not always clear and contemporary scholars do not always agree. The one indisputable fact, however, is that all children needed guardians, and women never rose above the status of children. Evans claims that even a woman in the late republic who married *sine manu* was still restricted in many ways by the authority of the husband and her own family's interest in the dowry-property. Roman men believed that women remained in a perpetual state of immaturity (*levitas animi*) where passion substituted for reason. If, then, a husband